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Urban Sanitary District.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1925.

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G. A. HENDERSON, AGENT PRINTER, POST OFFICE,
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To the Chairman and Members of the Stanhope Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report for 1925. This Report according to instructions received from the Ministry of Health (as per their Circular of December 10th, 1925,) is of the nature of a Survey Report of the preceding five years.

Natural and Social Conditions of the Area.

The District is situated in the centre of the Weardale Rural area in the west of Durham, and is a small area of 216 acres. It lies in the narrowest part of the valley and is protected on the North and South by hills rising to over 1000 feet in the first mile. The acreage is made up of meadow land, Stanhope Castle Park gardens and grounds, and part of the Ashes Quarry, worked by the Consett Iron Company. The area lies entirely on the North side of the river and roughly averages 700 feet above sea-level. The Town itself consists of one long rather straggling street about one mile long extending from East to West through the middle of the area. There is a Back Lane which runs almost parallel to the Main Street for half of the length of the latter.

The average rain-fall is 38" and there is a good natural drainage.

The Town is linked up with Darlington by the L. & N. E. R. line via Wear Valley Junction and Bishop Auckland and lies on the Main Road from Durham through Weardale to Alston and is 20 miles due West from Durham City.

According to the last Census (1921) returns, there were 449 dwellings including shops and Institutions in the District. The total dwellings occupied by families was 436, housing 442 private families. Of these dwellings 162 had not more than three rooms, 194 had four to five rooms, 67 had six to eight rooms, while 13 had had nine rooms or more.

The distribution of families or separate occupiers of the above mentioned houses was as follows: 4 private families were in occupation of one room; 111 families had each two rooms; 58 families had three rooms; 127 families had four rooms; 63 had five rooms; 58 families had six to seven rooms; 13 had eight to nine rooms and 8 had ten rooms and over. The total number of rooms in occupied dwellings was 1799 with a private family population of 1831 giving an average of .98 rooms per person as compared with the average for the whole County of .77. It is noted that Stanhope is second highest in the whole of the County Boroughs and Urban Districts, while Barnard Castle is highest with an average of 1.22 rooms per individual.

The Census population in 1921 was 1923, while the estimated population in the middle of 1925 was 1930. The population for statistical purposes given by the Registrar General is 1884.

The Rateable Value in October, 1925, was £5662, the Assessable Value being £5381. The latter sum by a 1d. rate represents £22.

The staple occupation of the Town is quarrying of stone from the outcrop of the great mountain limestone, part of the carboniferous system, on the rising ground North and South of the area. The stone is supplied to the Blast Furnaces of Consett and Middlesbrough as a flux in the smelting of Iron. Part of the Limestone is used for road metal. A few men work in Whin and Ganister quarries. The quarries are all outside the Urban area except part of the Ashes quarry. At the last Census 663 men and 149 women were returned as having definite occupations and of that number 301 men were at mining and quarrying occupations, and 76 women were employed in personal service.

The depression in the Iron industry on the East Coast during the last few years has reacted very severely on the Limestone workers in the District. Unemployment has been heavy and many men have left the District.

VITAL STATISTICS.—The births of 19 males and 10 females were registered during the year. Of these 1 male and 3 females were illegitimate. The rate per 1000 population is 15.3, a rate much below the general birth rate for England and Wales of 18.3. The average birth rate for five years previous to 1925 was 19.1, the birth rate in 1921 being 25.9.

The number of deaths recorded during the year in or belonging to the District was 27, 16 males and 81 females. There was one death under a year, two between 1 and 5, one between 15 and 25, nine between 25 and 65 while fourteen were 65 or over. Of the total of 27 deaths nine were outwardly transferable, six in the Poor Law Institution, one from Rookhope, one from Tow Law, two from Frosterley, one from Stanhope Rural and one from Wolsingham. Two died in the Stanhope Sanatorium, one from Rochdale and the other from Wigan. One other death of a temporary resident from Ryton occurred. This leaves a net total of 18, a death rate of 9.56 for the year which compares with an average for the previous five years of 13.4 and with the death rate for 1925 of England and Wales of 12.2.

One infant under one year died from Convulsions, a rate of 34.4 per 1000 births. The average for the previous five years is 97.7 and the Infant Mortality rate for England and Wales is 75.

The following table shows the number of persons receiving Poor Law relief and the weekly cost of such relief on the 31st December in each year :

YEAR.	MEN.	WOMEN.	CHILDREN.	TOTAL PERSONS.	TOTAL COST PER CASES.	WEEK.
						£
1921.	5	12	22	39	12	8
1922.	4	9	8	21	11	6
1923.	4	18	30	52	18	12
1924.	4	16	26	46	17	11
1925.	5	13	18	36	13	9

Urgent surgical cases are sent to the Royal Victoria Infirmary Newcastle-on-Tyne.

General Provision of Health Services in the Area.

HOSPITALS PROVIDED, OR SUBSIDISED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY OR BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL.—Hospitals and Sanatoria are provided by the County Council for Tuberculosis and Maternity cases. No Hospital is specially available for children. The Stanhope and Weardale Joint Hospital provides accommodation for Infectious cases. For small-pox an arrangement has been made between the Stanhope and Weardale Joint Hospital Committee and the Auckland, Shildon and Willington Joint Hospital Board under which

any cases which may occur are to be sent to the Binchester Whins Small-pox Hospital.

INSTITUTIONAL PROVISION FOR UNMARRIED MOTHERS.—There is no available Institution for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants and homeless children beyond the Weardale Union Poor Law Institution.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.—(a) A horse ambulance is available for Infectious cases.

(b) For urgent medical or surgical cases no public ambulance is available. Such cases are moved by ordinary motor cars.

CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.—Tuberculosis Dispensaries and Treatment Centre for Venereal Diseases are arranged for by the County Council. A Child Welfare Centre has been established in Stanhope during the year. It is supposed to cover the District from Frosterley westward to the upper reaches of the Dale. It is staffed and run by the County Council and meets every second week.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.—The staff consists of a Medical Officer of Health, a Sanitary Inspector and 3 men. They are all only part-time public health workers.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.—A fully trained District Nurse, provided by the Stanhope Nursing Association, is available for the Urban District area. This Association is one of the pioneer Nursing Associations of the North. It has been running since 1892 and has been self-supporting. The Nurse acts partly under instructions of the Medical Practitioners but does not attend Infectious cases (except Typhoid) nor does she do Maternity work.

MIDWIVES.—None practising in the District.

CHEMICAL WORK.—No special arrangements have been made, nor has any need arisen for such.

Bye-Laws in Force.

Approved by L.G.B. or
Minister of Health.

Slaughter-houses, Nuisances, Removal of Snow from Footways and Removal of House Refuse	1902
Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops ...	1903
New Streets and Buildings ...	1924

Acts Adopted.

	Year.
Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1890 (Part III)	1901
Private Street Works Act 1892 ...	1893
Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907—	
Part II., Sections 15-24 and 26-33	} 1910
Part III., Sections 34-42 and 44-49	
Part IV., Sections 52-60, 62-66 and 68	
Part V.	
Part II., Section 25 (now awaiting Minister of Health's Order)	
Public Health Act 1925—Part II., Sections 13-35	} 1926
Part III., Sections 36-43	
Part IV., Sections 45-50	

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

WATER SUPPLY.—I would repeat here what was reported last year: "The immense area from which the supply is drawn ought to be sufficient for every need no matter how dry the Summer happens to be. In the past the supply after drought has been limited, and in my opinion the older section of springs ought to be cleaned out and the pipes (at present sanitary drain pipes, not even in some cases with clay joints) ought to be replaced by metal pipes and lead joints. This would take time and would cost money but if gradually done would make the Stanhope water-supply second to none in the kingdom."

All the springs of the supply are tapped directly the water leaves the sandstone rock. In some of the older springs where the water is conducted through sanitary pipes, indifferently laid through soft peaty ground, the water becomes coloured with peat in wet weather, and in this condition the supply has a plumbo-solvent action. As a rule the springs taken in during recent years in drier weather are sufficient to keep the supply going. There is no out-

side storage reservoir, the different supplies falling into a covered reservoir of 33,000 gallon capacity. This means there is no possible chance of outside contamination of the supply.

During the year all the spring heads were cleared out and in the previous years some of the pipe lengths in the old supply area were inspected and found to be blocked.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.—The District is sewered by a main line leading from the extreme West of the area parallel to the river and discharging through two distributors on two special filter beds the effluent from which is led on through a series of irrigation beds. This system was laid down in 1911 and has given every satisfaction. The only difficulty was during storms when an excess of surface water entered the main sewer. This latterly was obviated by overflow systems for storm water being arranged at different points. Two years ago one of the distributors failed to give satisfaction. This has been replaced during the year by a new Adams' Sprinkler. The question of total irrigation for all the sewage over a larger area in preference to the distributor beds has been under consideration by your Council. The effluent at the present time into the river remains satisfactory.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.—The River Wear forms the Southern boundary of the Urban Area and the Stanhope Burn runs through the Western part of the Area. No pollution to speak of goes on.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.—There are now 178 water-closets, 168 ash-closets, and 6 ash-pit privies in the District. The conversion to water-closets has been going on gradually but steadily for some years. The type of ash-closet in vogue is quite an efficient one and with regular scavenging does not lead to nuisances except in the odd cases where tenants persist in putting vegetable refuse and liquid in them.

SCAVENGING.—Your Authority have their own scavenging arrangements which have worked very satisfactory for many years. All house refuse and ashpit contents, etc., are removed to suitable "dumps" outside the Urban area. There are still difficult cases to deal with where the ashpits are difficult of access. Extra supervision is required here to prevent the occurrence of any nuisance. To obviate this difficulty the provision of ashbins in certain cases would simplify the duties of scavenging as would additional back roads to some houses.

HEALTH WEEK.—A public lecture on 'Hygiene and the Home' was given in the Stanhope Town Hall during Health Week.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.—Most of the area has been covered by myself during the year, any insanitary condition being noted. Systematic house to house inspections with Mr. Ayton, your Sanitary Inspector, have likewise been made, the area covered being the Butts, the West End including Rose Terrace, West Terrace, Cowgarth Hill, the Square, Cross Hill and part of Back Lane and East Lane. And matters requiring attention have been reported to your Authority and in most cases have been attended to.

The Sanitary Inspector reports to me as follows :

“ Water Supply.—During July the water was turned off at nights for a very short period.

All springs on the moors have been cleaned out, the main Blackburn supply was inspected and found to be quite clean. The pipes in the high part of Paragon Street were bored out.

Nine notices were served re burst water pipes, all of which received attention.

Sewage Disposal Works and Sewers.—A new Adams sprinkler has been installed to replace the old Fiddian distributor which was worn out.

These works are now giving satisfaction, the effluent has been found on inspection to be satisfactory, all the irrigation beds have been cleaned and turned over.

The Riverside sewer was choked four times, three times the stoppage was removed by the drain rods, and once the sewer had to be opened out to remove the stoppage.

A new sewer was laid in West Terrace where it was found that an old stone sewer was still in existence.

Scavenging.—This is carried out by your own workmen.

Inspection of the District.—Inspections are carried out daily and condition of houses reported to the Council.

Slaughter-houses and Bake-houses are regularly inspected and have always been found to be in a clean and satisfactory condition.

New drains have been laid to a cowshed near the Station.

Housing Inspection.—Five new water-closets have been put in to replace ash-closets in Albert Terrace, High Street, West Terrace and the Square.

133 houses have been inspected during the year, and defects reported to the Council. One formal and five informal notices were served.

Infectious Diseases.—7 houses were fumigated after Infectious Diseases.

Public Conveniences.—The new Public Conveniences were opened to the public in August. These premises have been a great benefit to the District.

Schools.—Both Schools were fumigated during the time they were closed.

Closet Accommodation.—There are now 178 water-closets in the District, 166 ash-closets and 6 ashpit privies."

SMOKE ABATEMENT.—No smoke nuisances exist in the District.

PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS WHICH CAN BE CONTROLLED BY BYE-LAWS OR REGULATIONS.—There are no offensive trades in the District. There are no common lodging-houses in the District nor are there any underground sleeping rooms.

SCHOOLS.—The two Schools have been inspected and found to be quite sanitary. There is an ample water supply. The Council School in Back Lane has been scheduled by the County Education Authority as unsuitable as a Public Elementary School. Both Schools were closed from March 19th to April 10th, 1925, both inclusive owing to a serious outbreak of Mumps in the District.

HOUSING.

A Special Report on Housing was presented to your Council in December, 1925, and I beg to take the following extracts from it:

"From the Registrar General's Statistics it will be seen that comparatively Stanhope Urban District is in a very good position as to the housing of the population.

With reference to the need of further improved housing in the Urban District I would remind your Council that the following houses were classified in the Annual Report:

(1) No dwelling-houses were found to be so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation.

(2) Beyond approximately 10 houses previously reported on, all the houses were reasonably fit for human habitation.

Concerning this latter group there are included and added to up to date a total of 17 houses:

Six houses in the Butts with old and indifferent roofs.

Five in Bridge Street, one untenanted with bad roofing and interior delapidations.

Four in Chapel Street, no yard and deficient sanitary accommodation.

Two at Cross Street: one, a three roomed house, with poor through ventilation. One, a two roomed house, with soaking walls and only one room tenantable.

In approaching the question of overcrowding we have to remember:

(a) That the question of overcrowding is a purely relative one.

(b) That 111 families were living in 2 roomed houses in 1921 a percentage of 25.1 compared with 26.7 in 1911.

(c) That 4 families were living in one roomed houses in 1921 a percentage of 0.9 as compared with 1.1 in 1911.

(d) That separation of sexes implies a larger number of rooms than can be measured by cubic feet.

(e) That sufficiently commodious houses are not available for people with large families.

(f) That if they were it would be a question whether they could afford to pay rent for same.

And as regards forming an estimate as to the requirement or otherwise for new houses in the District the following points have to be considered:

(1) Number required to abate overcrowding.

(2) Number required to replace unfit houses.

(3) Number required to replace houses below a reasonable standard of fitness.

(4) Number required to meet increase in population.

Under the first heading there are no cases of gross overcrowding as understood in more populous Urban areas but in two or three cases larger houses are required particularly where growing families of large numbers are concerned.

At present under (2) to my knowledge there is only one unfit house in the area.

Under class (3) we have those already mentioned amounting to 17 where structural alterations are required to bring them up to date.

Under heading (4) with a decreasing population no additional houses are really required.

I would recommend that a Scheme be presented to include the building of 9 additional houses which would allow of alterations to the above existing deficient houses and at the same time allow of certain two roomed tenements being converted into four roomed houses which could be done in some cases of back-to-back houses and in floor tenements."

Speaking generally the Housing accommodation is good. The houses mostly are of the cottage type and almost without exception even the two roomed cottages are kept scrupulously clean. The sanitary arrangements also are good and beyond the occurrence of minor nuisances from wet ashpits there is little to complain of.

Housing Statistics for the year 1925.

Number of new houses erected during the year :

- (a) Total (including numbers given separately under (b) Nil.
- (b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts :
 - (1) By the Local Authority ... Nil.
 - (2) By other bodies or persons ... Nil.

I. Unfit Dwelling-houses—

Inspection—(1) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ... 157

(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910 or the Housing Consolidated Regulations 1925 ... previous lists revised.

(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ... 1

(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding subhead) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ... 16

II. Remedy of defects without service of formal notices—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers None

III. Action under Statutory Powers—

A. Proceedings under Section 3 of the Housing Act 1925—

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ... 1

(2) Number of houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notice (a) by owners ... 1

(b) by Local Authority in default of owners Nil

(3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declarations by owners of intention to close Nil

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts—

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 5

(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :

(a) By owners Nil

(b) By Local Authority in default of owners... Nil

C. Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of the Housing Act 1925 (Reference Closing Orders and Demolition Orders) Nil.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(a) MILK SUPPLY.

A complete inspection of all Byres and Cowsheds in the District has been made by me with your Inspector during the year. Twenty-one Byers were reported on including two used only to accommodate young stock. They all complied with the requirements of the Ministry of Health with regard to cubic space and floor measurements. The byres are not all up to date but since the previous Survey and Report some years ago there is a very marked improvement. The faults where present have reference to

drainage — and outside drainage at that, and since the special Report was sent in two of the worst cases of this sort have been absolutely remedied. The ventilation in several could be improved, as could lighting.

As regards Milkshops, that is, places where milk is sold “over the counter” there are none in the District. The milk almost in every case is sold directly after it is milked. The Dairies are clean and well kept and stocks of milk are not held.

The cows are well cared for and well fed and, speaking with a long experience in the Dale, are of a much higher type than was the case 20 years ago.

The quality of milk is good. There are no purveyors of graded milk and no wholesalers.

(1) No action has been taken as to tuberculous milk and tuberculous cattle.

(2) In the immediate Urban District 9 purveyors of milk were registered while 3 retailers from outside the area are registered.

(3) No refusal or revocation of retailer has occurred in the District.

(4) No Bacteriological examination of milk has been undertaken.

(b) MEAT:—There are two Butchers and two Slaughter-houses in the District. The latter are visited periodically by your Inspector and occasionally by myself. The Slaughter-houses are kept clean and no nuisances have occurred in this connection.

The following are the number of private Slaughter-houses in use in the District at the dates mentioned :

	In Jan. 1920.	In Jan. 1925.	In Dec. 1925.
Registered	2	2	2
Licensed	—	—	—

(c) OTHER FOODS :—There are two Butchers Shops, two Fried Fish Shops and two Bakehouses. The latter are only on a small scale and are well conducted as are the Fish Shops and Meat Shops.

(d) There are no cases of food poisoning in the Area.

(e) SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT:—Inspections, etc., are undertaken by the County.

Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious Diseases,

INFECTIOUS DISEASES GENERALLY.

During the year 13 cases of Infectious Disease have been notified, viz.: 8 of Scarlet Fever, 4 of Pneumonia, and 1 of Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

SCARLET FEVER.—Of the 8 cases notified, 7 were treated in the Isolation Hospital. 1 occurred in January and another in March both probably imported. Two occurred in October, one of whom died in Hospital. Three occurred in November and one in December. Dick tests have not been applied nor has Scarlet Fever Antitoxin been used.

DIPHTHERIA.—No cases were notified during the year. The Schick test has not been applied at any time. Antitoxin is supplied by your Authority.

PNEUMONIA.—The ages of the four cases notified were 6, 18, 34 and 83. They all recovered.

SMALL POX.—No cases occurred during the year. As a result of the outbreak of the disease in epidemic form in West Durham, a special Report was sent to your Authority early this year which recommended:

(1) That the accommodation reserved for cases from the Urban District of Stanhope and Binchester Whins Small Pox Hospital is available.

(2) That every encouragement be given to vaccination and re-vaccination.

(3) That pamphlets be distributed in the Urban District with regard to Small Pox and Vaccination.

(4) That Chicken Pox be made a notifiable disease pro-tem.

These recommendations were duly carried out.

Last year the following was incorporated into the Annual Report:

“ Small Pox. No cases have occurred in the District but the fact that it has assumed epidemic form in part of the North of England ought to be kept in mind. In the event of any serious outbreak the question of Hospital accommodation will have to be faced. The County Authorities are very much alive to the possibility and every precaution should be taken to ensure that the provision made for the District is absolutely available if needed. Every encouragement to vaccination and re-vaccination should be given.

I would remind your Council that a small outbreak did occur within comparatively recent years in the Urban District when emergency arrangements had to be made at considerable expense. Fortunately this effort was successful as there were no repeat cases from six cases.”

Notifiable Diseases.

Shewing the incidence of notifiable diseases during the years 1921-1925, the cases treated in Hospital and the deaths from such diseases—

Disease.	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	Total Cases notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Deaths.
Small Pox	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	1	—	—	7 (H7)	8 (H7)	16	14	1
Diphtheria	5 (H4)	7 (H6)	—	2 (H2)	—	14	12	—
Enteric Fever including Paratyphoid	—	1	—	4	—	5	—	—
Puerperal Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia	—	1 (D1)	2 (D2)	5 (D4)	4	12	—	7
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	—	—	1	1	3	—	—
Encephalitis Lethargica	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas	4	—	—	2	—	6	—	—

H in brackets denotes admission to Hospital.

D „ „ Deaths.

Special Services in connection with Infectious Disease.

Bacteriological Examinations are undertaken by the Durham College of Medicine, Newcastle-on-Tyne, by arrangement with the County Medical Officer of Health.

TUBERCULOSIS. At the beginning of the year six cases remained on the Register—three males and three females. Three additional cases of Lung disease were notified during the year—all females aged respectively 37, 50 and 44. Two deaths have occurred during the year, one female aged 50 and one male aged 45. This leaves a balance on the Register of 7 cases—two males and five females.

No action was necessary under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations 1925 nor under Section 62 of the same Act.

MEASLES AND WHOOPING COUGH. The District was clear of these diseases during the year.

MUMPS. A very widespread Epidemic occurred in the Spring and both Elementary Schools were closed for three weeks.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN GRAY, M.B.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

April 24th, 1926.

